

May 4, 1965

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VISIT TO PACIFIC AND ASIAN COUNTRIES, APRIL 19-MAY 1, 1965

MEMORANDUM BY H. C. LODGE *H. C. Lodge*

1. Troops

A. New Zealand promises to consider sending combat unit, asks specifically about artillery battery; Australia committed to sending one battalion; Philippines promises to send task force right away. Korean Prime Minister offers "a few more combat divisions". Troops not requested from Taiwan, Japan, India.

B. Holyoake (N.Z.) appears to be following and not leading public opinion; Menzies (Australia) sees clearly and acts bravely; Macapagal (Philippines) spoke up well; Sato (Japan) preoccupied with criticisms of "intellectuals"; Chiang Kai-shek (Rep. of China) steadfast, but cut off from reality and out of date; Park (Korea) determined and courageous. All send you best wishes and assurances of support. In particular Park (Korea) wished you to know that Korea-Japan talks will go according to plan and that political noises will not deter him.

2. Japan plans to take active part in economic development scheme and suggests concentrating effort on Mekong Valley and Malaysia - the mainland of Southeast Asia.

3. Indians were overwhelmingly preoccupied by Pakistani attack. Agreed on importance of South Viet Nam not falling to Communists. Characteristically eager for "negotiation". I told them of good impression an Indian ambulance or something similar would make in South Viet Nam.

4. In all countries it was obvious that governments are glad that we are in Viet Nam. They hope we will stay; they hope we will win. It is a fair guess that most Asians approve of the bombing of North Viet Nam.

5. Everywhere the question in their minds is: Are the Americans steadfast? Will the Americans stay? Our bombing of North Viet Nam has increased confidence in our determination. When a small weak country has its back to the wall the thing that keeps it going is faith in its strong ally.

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Prime Minister Chung Il Kwon of Korea said that what kept him going as a soldier during the Korean war was, in his own words, "that even if Pusan fell and the Americans had to fall back on Honolulu, they eventually would come back".

Therefore, from the standpoint of Asian opinion, including that of Viet Nam, the less talk about negotiations and about how long we are going to stay and when we are going to get out, the better. The fact that American people know so much less about Communist China than do Asian peoples and that the President must keep American opinion united must be explained. The sure knowledge of American determination to stay is, in and of itself, a big military asset.

6. The governmental leaders of New Zealand, Australia, The Philippines, Republic of China, Japan, Korea -- and even the Japanese Buddhist leaders -- all found fault with what they call American "public relations". Complaints were: that the facts on terrorism were not made clear; that the structure of Vietnamese society and its lack of a national tradition had not been explained; that we were apologetic about the bombing of the North; that photographs of huge destruction in Viet Nam should be widely distributed and published; that bad news such as weapons loss should not be published; that the USIA output was aimed too much at intellectuals; that there was practically no spot news material with glossy prints and short "impact" copy for publication in popular press, radio and TV; that output was not selective enough, for example, Vietnamese civilian casualties could be stressed abroad without being advertised in Viet Nam.

Recommendation: As regards public relations, there should be a drum fire of glossy prints and crisp concrete copy on Viet Cong misdeeds and on Vietnamese accomplishments. Also, when we are criticized for bombing North Viet Nam we can properly link our bombing of steel and concrete with Viet Cong killing of women and children. But all this is by way of rebuttal. The strongest idea which is working for us is the idea expressed by Churchill at the time of the fall of Czechoslovakia in 1938, and which I am quoting from memory: "The idea that peace can be promoted by throwing a small nation to the wolves is a fatal delusion".

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7. In Canberra, in Manila, and in Taipei, mention was made of an international aegis for the Viet Nam operation. In Canberra and Manila it was suggested that SEATO could be used for this purpose, with new members being brought in as appropriate. The Vietnamese government is considering a request to SEATO.

Recommendation: Policy toward SEATO should be restudied. Using it as the basis for an international consortium on Viet Nam may have possibilities.

8. In all countries, even including India, there was no doubt that Communist China is the real enemy in Viet Nam. But the consensus seems to be that the Government of North Viet Nam still has considerable freedom of action -- enough to make our pressure on them worthwhile.

9. In both Australia and New Zealand the Prime Ministers agreed to make some public mention of the outrageous Viet Cong treatment of Gustave Hertz.

10. Recommendation: Intensive study should be given to the idea of making the Trust Territories of the Pacific (population 89,000) into a part of the State of Hawaii. While there are some obvious difficulties, such action would promptly put the United States into the Pacific in a way which even Sukarno, Sihanouk and the Viet Cong could not misunderstand. Also our failure to incorporate this territory might result in its going to somebody else. The world is filling up and there is not much vacant land left.

11. Responsible Buddhist leaders in Japan were informed of availability of U.S. private and public resources to help Buddhist humanitarian activities. I also talked with Tri-Quang in Saigon. I hope this has planted a seed which will mean that, in the future, Americans will be working closely with Buddhists in the fourteen countries where Buddhism exists, thus countering Communist efforts to penetrate the Buddhist religion; that it will provide a benevolent and peaceful way to bring help from an advanced country like Japan to the underdeveloped countries of Southeast Asia; and that it will specifically enable Buddhists in Viet Nam to work on humanitarian projects thus becoming an anti-Communist influence. The U.S. Government's Buddhist expert, Dr. Gard, based in Hong Kong, travels in the fourteen Buddhist countries and is trying to act as a catalyst. I look for some good results.

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12. Recommendation: Consideration should be given to rewarding such a staunch ally as Korea by enabling it to gain economic benefits deriving from the Viet Nam situation. For example the U.S. Navy is using Japanese crews to man LST's operating in Viet Nam. When the going gets rough these crews may well be withdrawn by Japanese Government. There are Koreans with prior service on LST's who could quickly be made available. I asked the Embassy in Seoul to prepare for such a contingency. Construction contracts for airfield construction, etc., could also be given to Korea, using unemployed Korean ex-servicemen who, as construction companies, could take care of themselves militarily and indirectly help U.S. assistance efforts in Korea.

13. Minister Francesco Malfatti, diplomatic adviser to President Saragat of Italy, says the decision to bomb the north was a "brilliant diplomatic move". He sees our bombing creating shortages in Viet Nam which the Communist Chinese can only meet with the greatest difficulty. He says that, for once, time is on our side and is working against them.

14. The Pope sent you his regards. He said the offer in your Baltimore speech for unconditional discussions was "handsome and generous". While not wanting to spread the war he prays for your success and is grateful for the load which America is carrying.

15. To sum up:

1. Our friends in Asia support our policies concerning Viet Nam even if they don't all admit it publicly.
2. Being both weak and "under the gun", they need frequent reassurance that we remain firm, strong-minded and resolute.
3. Your policies, according to best U.S. experts in Consulate at Hong Kong, have "outraged" Chinese Communists and thrown them off the track. It is not what the "book" says is supposed to happen.
4. Your policies are sound; you are carrying them out ably and energetically; you are definitely on the right track.

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May 4, 1965

Visit to Saigon, April 28-29

Memorandum by H. C. Lodge *H. C. Lodge*

I. Points You Raised Before I Left

Your idea of establishing American hospitals throughout Viet Nam (wherever they can be protected) is excellent.

USOM Chief Killen and doctors differ. USOM is trying to recruit an Air Force doctor, General James Humphries, Lackland Air Force Hospital, Texas, to take hold of this whole problem. USOM contends that some sort of facility must be available when the doctor arrives: a building, electricity, water, and sometimes access roads. They are now working on fifteen facilities and have plans to do eleven more.

But civilian doctors are dissatisfied. They say USOM refuses to pay a civilian doctor who stays less than three months--and that no civilian doctor can take three months away from his profession. On the other hand many could take one month.

The Dooley Foundation believes they could recruit doctors to fill a hundred hospitals.

Recommendation: That General Humphries--if he is as able as he is said to be--be induced to take charge of this problem at once under USOM and push the biggest program that conditions permit. And that medical care be on a rough and ready--and not on a perfectionist--basis. You have a tremendous idea.

You asked whether every possible step was being taken to stimulate recruiting. Military manpower has gone from 207,418 in June, 1964 to an estimated 270,836 in November, 1965. A top of 292,000 is planned for next March. The Government has lowered the draft age to 18. Eight thousand recruits a month is considered an ideal figure. Last month there were 10,000 of whom 3,000 were conscripts and 7,000 were volunteers. I asked about a GI bill of rights or "40 acres and a mule" for the Vietnamese soldier to give him a chance to get an education when he gets out. They are "thinking" about it.

This good record is offset by the doubling of the strength of the Viet Cong by personnel from the North Vietnamese Army and by an increase in desertions.

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Recommendation: A "GI bill of rights" for Vietnamese soldiers and benefits for their families should be put into effect.

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It appears inadvisable to flood the country with US surplus foods. To do so on other than a very selective basis would probably help to supply the enemy because of the difficulty of protecting the food properly. The Vietnamese have the highest per capita caloric input of any people in Southeast Asia and don't need surplus agricultural products.

But there is use for some consumers' goods, such as air conditioning machines for industry, refrigerators for the fishing industry and small diesel engines for fishing boats of the kind which our fishermen used to use twenty-five years ago and which can now be readily obtained in Japan.

Recommendation: An intensive study be given to the merits of making air conditioners, fish refrigerators and small diesel engines available.

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It does not appear desirable to introduce teams of 30-40 Americans per province. This would tend to smother the Vietnamese officials. There would be housing problems. The best procedure is to bring in Americans as needed to fill specific jobs.

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Contractors and engineers quickly to repair roads and bridges are desirable to the extent that they can be protected, but it seems better to use military forces for combat rather than for stationary duty of this kind.

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On the matter of the Marines and the Vietnamese army engaging in raids, I learned that "deep patrolling" has already begun, which is not quite the same thing.

When it comes to combining Marine activities with those of the Vietnamese it is believed best to have battalions brigaded together

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in an international force rather than to put in a small number of Marines into a Vietnamese battalion. The latter would present questions of command and of communications which would be complicated.

Recommendation: These ideas should be more thoroughly studied by an independent military expert.

Your announcement after the bombing of the Embassy that a new Embassy building would be built had an excellent effect. Ambassador Taylor advises that this project to build a new Embassy has come to a complete stop in Washington.

Administration personnel in the Embassy say: that present plans call for a building costing more than \$3,000,000 as compared with the British building, which looks nice to me, but which cost \$384,000 in 1962. Can we not build a similar practical, moderately priced U.S. building? I am informed that our proposed building will have many large all-glass walls and carved stone screens and that the old plans may well be obsolete in the light of present security conditions. Surely the recent Embassy explosion with those killed and wounded by flying glass argues against using glass walls for a U.S. Embassy in Saigon. There is also a house on the U.S. lot which could, with moderate expense, be remodeled into a residence. In that country the residence and the chancery should be on the same piece of land.

Recommendation: That the building of a moderately priced new Embassy be pressed. Having made the announcement it looks weak not to go ahead with it.

You asked: "Are we getting enough out of the CIA?" I do not feel that we are. But in the time which I had I was unable to find added ways of using these CIA men, many of whom are of truly impressive ability. This too should be further explored.

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II. General Situation

A quick day and a half study reveals the following favorable factors:

The Quat Government is satisfactory.

The "Hop Tac" Pacification program has created a narrow, but secure zone around Saigon without which the city might be under siege today and has developed personnel and procedures to overcome systematic Communist subversion-terrorism which should make possible its expansion to other parts of the country--and ultimately to other nations. This could, if vigorously pursued, be very significant.

Due to the strikes in North Vietnam, there is higher morale. The Apostolic Delegate says that conditions for the Catholics are "greatly improved," with areas open to priests which were closed before.

Buddhist thinking seems to have evolved in the last year. The Buddhist monk, Tri Quang, regarded by some as a neutralist, not only approves of the bombing of the North and the presence of U.S. troops but actually urges more vigorous bombing to overthrow the regime in Hanoi and, if we have not the "will" to do that, to convert the regime from a satellite to an oriental neutral Yugoslavia.

The "beachheads" at Danang and those planned elsewhere along the coast make it impossible for us to be pushed out against our will and would much increase our bargaining position.

There appears to be a greater realization than ever that while the bombing is indispensable and the proposed economic development program extremely valuable, we must also defeat the enemy in the South.

Finally there is first-class human material in the U.S. agencies. But the following should also be noted:

The possibility of a coup can never be excluded.

U.S. demands on the Government of Vietnam do not seem to take sufficiently into account the fact that in the American sense of the

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word there is no central Government in Vietnam--merely a pale shadow of one. Yet we make forty "non-military" demands plus twenty-one military plus twelve from the CIA, seventeen from USIA and a number of others stemming from the Honolulu Conference, virtually all of which must go through Dr. Quat, who has very few helpers.

Recommendation: We should concentrate on the two or three most vital programs, which he is capable of doing and do whatever we can do alone.

The Hop Tac program, good as it is, has not developed the needed momentum a) because the main force of the Viet Cong has been just about doubled by men from the army of North Vietnam and b) adequate ideological drive is still lacking.

Finally, the fact that dependents have been sent home means that American officials lead a sort of garrison life. As regards the Embassy, this has had the effect of cutting them off from the civilian contacts around Saigon which is the only way to get a real feel of the political realities. The office work in Saigon is so heavy that only the activities of intelligent wives have made it possible for Embassy officers to have the non-American contacts outside of office hours through which they can be adequately informed. Without such contacts we run the danger of "flying blind" as far as political conditions are concerned.

Recommendation: The decision to send the American children home is unquestionably very wise. There appears to me, however, to be merit in the proposition that those wives who wish to return at their own risk should be allowed to do so. The Embassy wives have a vital intelligence and political contribution to make. The fact that there are many U.S. Government women in Saigon now as secretaries and as military nurses also argues in favor of admitting wives.

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III. Organization

There are seven broad fields of activity in which the Ambassador must play the key role and which are as follows (not listed in order of importance):

1. Backgrounding the press and keeping a huge and growing American and foreign press corps happy.
2. Reporting to Washington.
3. Persuading and activating the Government of Vietnam.
4. Maintaining contact with diplomats for information, for ideas and because they are influential in determining what is said in their countries about the United States. Also, when we work hard to get 37 foreign flags flying in Vietnam we simply must keep in touch with the Ambassadors from these countries.
5. Contact with unofficial Vietnamese (this includes the great religious leaders) without whom you not only cannot stave off dangerous divisions but also without whom you are misled politically.
6. Visiting country-side with Chief of State.
7. Coordinating and integrating the U.S. effort.

Thanks to the big way in which you have seen the problem, the whole U.S. Mission is better organized than it has ever been before. Having a Deputy Ambassador of the caliber of Alexis Johnson is an enormous help. Zorthian is a splendid press officer. We have a fine political section to help with the reporting to Washington and with the diplomatic corps.

But the Ambassador (and the Deputy Ambassador in his absence) is still the only person with power to press hard for intergration and coordination--the only generalist in a crowd of specialists. There is an excellent career diplomat who is "executive secretary of the U.S. Mission Council," but this is not at all the same thing as having a constantly pressing coordinator of presidential appointee calibre with standing and prestige of his own in Washington. Some

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integration has been achieved in the Hop Tac program, but a first class coordinator could really forge the new tool which we need to overcome Communist subversion-terrorism.

Recommendation: That such a coordinator be put to work under the Ambassador.

IV. EFFECTIVE, PRACTICAL, POLITICS

A major weakness in the entire Vietnam picture is still the lack of a vigorous and appealing ideology. In all candor it must be said that the Viet Cong is still ahead of the Government in this respect. Our side will not get off the ground politically as long as this condition exists.

There are four ideas which have tremendous appeal:

"Government must be the servant of the people"

"No corruption"

"The soldier helps the farmer"

"Land to the tiller," which is perhaps the greatest.

But none of these "propaganda lines" are even worth mentioning unless there is performance. The performance must come first and then the Government could talk about it. Only an insurgent can talk without performing. But on the highly appealing cause of land reform the Viet Cong actually have performed and the GVN has not.

Land reform is a subject which has been intellectualized to death. Action is needed and, while Dr. Quat would favor it, one must assume that the Government cannot handle it alone.

Recommendation: That intensive study be given to the practicality of the United States providing funds to help the Vietnamese Government buy land and distribute it to the farmers. This would be expensive, but it would be enormously effective in winning over the people and would be a body blow to the Viet Cong.

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I would guess that the Catholic Church might cooperate by offering some of its land in Vietnam for distribution to the farmers.

→ *1-17-68 copy*
 Vietnamese officials are receptive to our ideas. Their performance is improving. Prime Minister Quat is most cooperative. Some first-rate Americans are coming out to help. But the problem is not one of good ideas, which are bubbling over in Vietnam; the age-old question in Vietnam is how to get something done. They are actually bogged down by the number of U.S. suggestions.

* * *
 The Government propaganda program continues to be terribly dreary. Unlike the Communist program, not enough is done to amuse the people and to make them laugh. They love old American western movies and the old American slapstick such as Laurel and Hardy but virtually all they see are dull documentaries telling them how to plant corn. I am advised that these old films exist in large quantities but that there is a deadlock between the owners of these films and USIA in Washington on the matter of price.

Recommendation: That some one close to you appeal to the owners of these films to be reasonable and let us have them for Vietnam at a fair price.

* * *
 Most of the photographs showing soldiers of the Vietnamese army torturing or terrorizing Viet Cong are so-called "gag photographs" which were stimulated by the photographer. There are many instances of photographers, often non-Americans, offering a Vietnamese soldier \$5.00 if he will allow himself to be photographed holding the point of a knife at the throat of a Viet Cong prisoner.

V. Pacification

As you know the Hop Tac program aims at pacifying the seven provinces around Saigon, which include 40 per cent of the population. The area is divided into zones in roughly concentric circles with the city of Saigon as the center. Results to date are as follows:

Some 390 hamlets have been pacified in the Hop Tac area in the last four months, including 330,000 people. This represents an immense coordinated effort by persons who are specialists in propaganda, military, police, political organization, economic and social programs. There is a six week training center. A chairman

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has had to be found for each hamlet, a number of whom get killed every day. Under this program, in spite of legal technicalities, several hundred terrorists have been apprehended in the last year, some of whom have been shot, some of whom are in jail.

Pacification has actually gone so far that 200 popular elections have been held for hamlet chiefs and hamlet councils. This implies a high degree of law and order.

Foreign Minister Fanfani of Italy thought this was a fact which should be publicized in Europe, as it is a good rebuttal to those who say we disregard the Geneva Convention provisions regarding holding elections.

People are actually giving information to the Government about the Viet Cong. In a few cases the regular army has been able to leave because the local militia forces were strong enough to do the job. Viet Cong recruiting has diminished in this area so that the Viet Cong are now abducting youths by force. Recruiting for the Vietnam army has picked up. The methods which I have described to you previously and which have worked well in other countries are being used: a census, identification cards, a curfew, all of which is run by the police--and in these hamlets the police exists. Our senior police adviser is a former FBI man who is well considered. The soldiers in the area are beginning to practice good politics by making themselves helpful to the farmer and by ending the misbehavior which has been so common.

There seems to be general agreement that if we had not undertaken the Hop Tac program the city of Saigon would be today under a state of siege with mortar shells landing in the city.

The program has a high priority in the Government of Vietnam and a start has been made to have such programs in the other corps. The 390 hamlets have also produced a group of experts--a sort of "seed corn"--which should put the program into effect elsewhere.

This is all to the good. Communist subversion-terrorism is the greatest external threat confronting the United States and we must learn how to overcome it. Also, if there were a 100% successful Hop Tac program throughout the country the war would be obviously over.

Unfortunately the forward motion in extending this program appears to be very slight. A coordinator of the kind described above, might get this program really moving and, if he did, the results would be momentous.

But a coordinator PLUS a kind of program with strong political appeal might get this program really moving. If so, the results would be momentous.

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When I visited China in 1929 it was, -if anything, even more disorganized than Vietnam is today. Yet both China and North Vietnam are effectively organized now--perhaps not as elaborately as we are, but well enough to take one program, such as land tenure, get it well started and then take on another.

In Vietnam, therefore, we face nothing less than the momentous question: can a decentralized oriental and Confucianist country become strong, orderly and effective without becoming Communist?

The fate of humanity can hang on the answer.

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